Riding on a Donkey

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The Journey to Jerusalem

It is now past Easter, but we shall go back for a moment to some events before Easter, to the well-known occasion called Palm Sunday. We find this described in all the Gospels, but this time we read it from Mark.

> Mark 11:1-11
> And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,
> And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.
> And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.
> And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.
> And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?
> And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.
> And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.
> And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way.
> And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:
> Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.
> And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

While we are here at the end of the Scripture portion, we are actually back at the beginning. The story begins in Bethany, after all, and it ends with him going out to Bethany with the twelve. The story is therefore quite simple: the Lord came by way of Bethany, or from Bethany. Through that place he went to Jerusalem, and towards

evening he disappeared back to Bethany again. It is thus a kind of circular journey: from Bethany to Jerusalem and back again.

> I have never understood why this event is called “the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.” The heading here says “the entry at Jerusalem,” which is already somewhat better. Actually the little word “into” does not really belong, because although it was a special journey to Jerusalem, it certainly did not continue into Jerusalem in the same way.

There are various accounts in circulation about this event. A more extended version is found in

> Luke 19:37 and 41-44
> And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;
> And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,
> Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.
> For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
> And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

This does not mean that the Lord did not enter Jerusalem, but that the festive procession ended before Jerusalem. There may perhaps have been another procession when he actually entered the city, but in that case it was certainly no longer festive. When the central figure himself weeps over the city, it is hardly possible any longer to speak of a triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

I know there are beautiful wall maps on which you see people waving palm branches in the streets of Jerusalem, but that is not how it was. The only reasoning I have sometimes heard that allows for an entry proper assumes that there were several entries into Jerusalem. That the one in Matthew was different from the one in Luke, on another day or another date. One time it stopped, as in Luke, before Jerusalem, and the other time the Lord actually rode into Jerusalem. I do not believe that. I believe there is only one event, told four times in different ways. There is no point in telling exactly the same thing four times. After all, you can make four different reports of the same event. I have never been able to find a single contradiction in them.

The Lord Jesus therefore went to Jerusalem in a rather festive manner, while we learn at any rate from Luke’s Gospel that the procession did not end festively in Jerusalem. It ended before Jerusalem, at the descent of the mount of Olives, and when the Lord saw the city he wept over it. We also know what happened afterwards. The Lord did indeed enter Jerusalem, but not in this manner. Every evening he turned back again on his steps to Bethany, which lies on the mount of Olives (Mark 11:11).

In Bethany stood the well-known house of Lazarus and of Mary and Martha, the friends of Jesus. There he received lodging, or better said, they gave him lodging. In Jerusalem he did not wish to stay. He spent not a single night more in Jerusalem. After Sunday, the first day of the week, he went every day to Jerusalem, taught and preached there various things, and in the evening he returned to Bethany on the mount of Olives. He did this until the 14th of Nisan. On the evening of the 14th he was in Jerusalem to eat the

Passover with the disciples. That same evening, after eating the Passover, he went out again with his disciples to go up the mount of Olives. For that purpose he crossed the brook Kidron. That is the lowest part between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives. On the other side of the Kidron the mount of Olives began, more or less. At the foot of the mountain was the garden of Gethsemane, and there the Lord was taken prisoner. It was thus more or less on the mount of Olives, although at the bottom.
The Lord Jesus never spent another night in Jerusalem. Why not? Because his thoughts were on what he had said in Luke 19. There it says that the things which belonged to Jerusalem's peace were hidden from her. Jerusalem did not wish to know it. Israel did not wish to know it. Note that it says:

> Luke 19:42 (KJV)
> Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

And the account ends with:

> Luke 19:44
> ... because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Then the question is: what day was it? In the first place it was the 10th of the first month, which means that the Passover lamb was to be taken into the house, so that it might be killed and eaten four days later on the 14th. Since we know from 1 Corinthians 5 that the Passover lamb is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was therefore the day of "taking Christ into the house." And if the Passover lamb is Christ, then the house in this case is obviously Jerusalem. So it was the day of taking the Passover lamb into the house, but the intention was that in Jerusalem the Lord would come in. That is the most natural understanding. Actually everyone could have known that.

69 Times 7 Years

A more difficult aspect of the story is another side. That day in that year was the 173,888th day since "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (Daniel 9:25). It was the last day of the 69 weeks of Daniel from the prophecy in Daniel 9. There it says that 70 weeks, that is, 70 times 7 years, would pass until the coming of the Messiah. I am putting it now in my own words. Actually that is the period until the breaking in of the kingdom of the Messiah, the final conversion of Israel, and so on — the breaking in of the Messianic kingdom.
Sixty-nine times 7 years had now passed, exactly on the day of the entry at Jerusalem. It was the last day of the 69 weeks of Daniel, so that only one week of 7 years remained until the breaking in of the Messianic kingdom. The question of the disciples, a few weeks later to the risen Christ — "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" — was therefore not so strange. There were only 7 years left. But in Daniel it says that 69 times 7 years would pass "unto the Messiah the Prince" (which literally means unto the Anointed, the Crown Prince). A prince in the Bible is not a king, but a crown prince — the first in the line of succession to the throne. So 69 times 7 years until Messiah the Prince, but after that time the Messiah would be cut off, and he would not have his kingdom. A great deal of other misery would happen. There would be a great destruction over Jerusalem. Only much later must the last 7 years still pass until the coming of the Messiah in glory and until the breaking in of his kingdom.
This has not yet happened. The thought is that the 69 weeks were completed on the day of the entry at Jerusalem, but that the 70th week has still not begun and has not yet

started. Because Israel did not know the time of her visitation, because Israel did not want this Messiah, this Christ either, it is as if a pause button was pressed on the clock, so that time stands still, just like on a chess clock. There is then another clock that does continue. When one stands still, the other begins to run. But this one stood still and still stands still. “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” said John the Baptist. It is still at hand; it still lasts 7 years. That was so last year and two years ago as well. That clock no longer runs. That will come later. The other clock just keeps running. It is almost at the moment when it receives a knock, and then the first one begins to run again. We shall not go deeper into that now, but that is how the story fits together.
On that day of the so-called entry at Jerusalem, 69 weeks had passed. Not in the 70th, but after the 69th the Messiah would be cut off and he would not have his kingdom. Another people would come and another king, and he would destroy the sanctuary. That thought stands in Luke 19. Literally it stands in Daniel 9, but in Luke 19 it is referred to in that way. And every evening in the week that now followed, after this “entry” at Jerusalem, the Lord went back to the mount of Olives. We also know that every evening there he spoke about what the future would bring and what would happen to Jerusalem. Roughly with the view of Jerusalem at night. Then it says: Jerusalem will be destroyed, one way or another. An unbelieving people will come under the wrath and judgment of God. That is what is repeatedly announced, and why the Lord weeps over the city. He approaches that city, of which he knew that it would be destroyed. Strictly speaking not only once, but twice. Once according to Luke 21 — that has already happened long ago — and then once more at the end of the 70th week, as announced in Matthew 24. It comes down to this: Jerusalem was destroyed after the 69 weeks, and Jerusalem will ultimately be destroyed at the end of the 70th week. That has been spoken of.

> Mark 11:10 (KJV)
> Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Here the King came to Jerusalem, but as King he did not enter Jerusalem. He stopped before that time. If I have to tell the story quickly, I say that the kingdom has never, to this day, come any further than the mount of Olives. There the Lord was last seen as Messiah the Prince. Then I do not even mean on the occasion of Palm Sunday. I was actually thinking more of Ascension Day. That is exactly the same story. When the Lord was on earth, he was last seen on the mount of Olives. There they watched him go up. Then two men appeared, who said: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).
Mark 11:1
And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

Two Men and the Church
There go two men. That is not the first time, and not the last time either, that two men are found, are sent, or have an encounter with the Lord. Every time we, especially in the New Testament, come across two men, that is an expression of the Church in our days. That is because those two men are in some way connected with the Lord Jesus. The Church is too. But the Church counts for two, and therefore she is represented as two men. The Church has received the birthright; she is after all a church of the firstborn,

and the firstborn always receives a double portion. That is why it is two men who picture the Church.
You already have that in John chapter 1. There are two disciples of John the Baptist who leave John and follow the Lord. The Lord asks them: “What seek ye?” And they say: “Master, where dwellest thou?” And the Lord says: “Come and see.” That is typically the Church. Two men; we know the name of one — Andrew. “The manly one” means that. But they are typically a picture of the Church, which counts double, is manly, and has followed the Lord Jesus to a place that is not even named. For we do not know where they went. That is the Church, drawn out of the world, following the Lord to a place that is hidden. Hidden from the world, but joined to the Lord in his house. That house is obviously the Church. The house of God, the house of Christ. That is two men.
Much later than this event in Mark 11, we meet the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). Two men, outside Jerusalem, with only one name, namely Cleopas. On the way they have an encounter with the Lord. He makes himself known to them in a remarkable way through the Scriptures, and then he disappears from their sight. That is the Church. The Lord has made himself known to us, outside Jerusalem. A Lord whom we do not see, but whom we have nevertheless recognised — at the breaking of bread, for example. We see him not, yet we love him. That is the Church. So it always goes.
Here you find two men who are sent out, two disciples whose names we do not know. That does not matter either. They are a picture of the Church. But when later the Lord — from that same mount of Olives, perhaps even from the same place — ascends to heaven, two men in white clothing are seen in his place. Why is that? Because it is a picture of the Church. The Lord is in heaven, and what do we find here on earth? In place of the Lord Jesus we find here on earth the Church, pictured by those two men in white clothing.
We had already seen them once before, at the resurrection, at the grave. With the risen Christ appears the Firstborn, the Firstfruits, and he is represented by a double, by a two, because of the birthright. And so it continues. Every time you read in the Bible about two, it is the Church. Exactly the same with the five loaves and the two fishes. Five has to do with the mystery, and two fishes (or the two in the picture) is the Church. You perhaps know the offering of the firstfruits loaves at Pentecost. Those are also two loaves, made from one dough. That is again just as much a picture of the Church. There are countless examples. A very beautiful one, which is not so obvious, is that of the ship in which Paul sailed. Paul, the man through whom church truths are revealed, sailed on a ship that had the sign of twins as its figurehead. The constellation. They are called Castor and Pollux. “Christ in the stars”:
The ship had for a sign: Castor and Pollux. In Greek it stands: Dioskouroi. This is the Greek name for the constellation Gemini (= Twins). In Greek mythology they are called Castor and Pollux, hence the translation. Perhaps that was the name of the ship, but it was certainly given as a “sign.” This Greek name is mentioned here and it is said to have a meaning. This meaning can only be taken from Greek mythology, and in fact reference is made to it there.
That does not mean that the Bible endorses all that mythology. The Twins is a picture of the coming of Christ in glory. This second coming in glory is together with the Church, as his Body. Why? Because the ship is a picture of the Church. That is the twin, the double, the one that counts double. You find that here too.

Mark 11:1

And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

Jerusalem has first of all to do with a kingdom that is revealed in the world. It is the capital of the Messianic kingdom, both now and in the future. But the mount of Olives lies outside Jerusalem. What is more, the mount of Olives lies before Jerusalem. In Zechariah 14 it says: “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” Even the mention of “on the east” indicates that it is before the city. That means that when you go to Jerusalem, you come first to the mount of Olives and then to Jerusalem itself. You come from Jericho over the mount of Olives to Jerusalem. That was the route then, and it is still the route.

The Lord, by the way, also came from Jericho — read chapter 10, the story of blind Bartimaeus in Jericho.

If Jerusalem pictures the revealed kingdom in the future, what then is the mount of Olives? It is a picture of the hidden kingdom now. Jerusalem is Zion, a mountain. But before the Lord Jesus comes to Zion, he comes to the mount of Olives — a mountain that is not in Jerusalem but before Jerusalem. The Lord will go to Jerusalem, yet he returns to the mount of Olives. That is his place. It ought to have been Jerusalem, but he remains at the mount of Olives.

The mount of Olives is an expression of our present dispensation. We may also bear in mind that in the future this mount of Olives will once again count for two, because it will split (Zechariah 14:4). A double — it proves then to be a two. That happens at the second coming of Christ.

The mount of Olives is therefore a picture of the hidden kingdom of Christ. It can also be put another way: the Lord, risen from the dead, said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18), and then he ascended on the clouds to heaven. Where then is his glory? Where is the kingdom to be found? If we trace it, we get no further than the mount of Olives. Or one could say: from the mount of Olives upward to heaven. But the point is that the mount of Olives pictures the heavenly kingdom of Christ. It is first in heaven (pictured by the mount of Olives) and only afterwards on the earth (pictured by Jerusalem). Every time the mount of Olives is mentioned, this is the thought.

In Ezekiel we read that the glory of the Lord departed from Jerusalem. It rested for a while on the mount of Olives and then disappeared. Out of Jerusalem, to the mount of Olives, outside the camp. The glory of the Lord is a picture of the risen Christ. The glory of the Lord fills the whole temple, the tabernacle, and so on. In Ezekiel’s visions that glory of the Lord departed from Jerusalem and was last seen on the mount of Olives — the picture of the risen Christ. He was last seen on the mount of Olives, and from there he disappeared. If you have to point to it on earth, you must say: there he still is, and in the future he will continue from there. When the clock starts running again, the story will continue from that point. Then the Lord will once more set his feet on the mount of Olives and from there at last go on to Jerusalem. The only question is: on a donkey? We shall go on first.

To Bethphage or to Bethany?

Mark 11:1a
And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives,

...Later, in verse 4, there is mention of a place where two ways met. A place where two ways met is a fork in the road. The translators have made all sorts of other things of it. I have never understood why, so I keep to a place where two ways met — a fork. Where those roads led is not difficult either. One to Bethphage and the other to Bethany. That is stated as well. Two villages, a fork in the road, and at the junction of those two ways they found:

Mark 11:4
And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

There must therefore also have been a house or something similar there. The question is: how do the roads run and which route is chosen? We know the answer, because at the end of the story the Lord ends up in Bethany and not in Bethphage. Bethphage is the house (Beth) of figs (phage). Bethany is best translated, I think, as "the house" (Beth) and "I" (ani) — more freely: "I am the house," "the house that I am." Who is that house? It is the house of God, that is, Bethel — the Church. Bethany, situated on the mount of Olives, is the Church.

Bethphage has to do with the fig tree, and what happens with it is told in the rest of the chapter from verse 12 onwards.

Mark 11:12-14
And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:
And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.
And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

They came to a fig tree that bore no fruit, and it was cursed. What Bethphage pictures — that house with figs — you immediately understand. The fig tree, as is well known, is in any case a picture of Israel. Bethphage is therefore also a picture of Israel, the Jewish state.

The point is that here on the mount of Olives the roads divide: one to Bethphage, one to Bethany. Does the Lord go to the Jewish state? Will it be restored? Then it would have been Bethphage, but it is not. The roads part, and the Lord does not end up in Bethphage but in Bethany. This may seem a complicated story, but from this day onward the Lord officially takes the road to Bethany — that is, not to Israel but to the Church. The 69th week of Daniel is over. What now? Is the 70th week now to come, and will the Jewish state be restored? Will Israel be converted? No. What then? Instead, the Lord will take out of the Gentiles a people for his name. That is the Church. This is pictured by Bethany. For that is the place where the house of Lazarus stood — Lazarus being a picture of the true Eleazar, that is, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, who was dead and is alive (Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5–7). It is a picture of the high-priesthood of Christ. That is the route taken. It is Bethany and not Bethphage.

In the other accounts of this event Bethphage is not even mentioned at all. There it is only about Bethany, which proves that this is what it is about: not Israel, but the Church. That is what is already pictured here. Hence the fork in the road. And what the door in

verse 4 is, is easy enough. Everywhere in the Bible where you meet a door, it is a picture of the crucifixion, of the death of the Lord Jesus. In that death he leaves this world, this old creation. At the same time an opening is given, through the resurrection, into the new creation. The door is therefore the transition from the old to the new creation — that is, the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant. It concerns the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who at his resurrection became the Christ (Messias) (Acts 2 and 13). It was already so at the exodus from Egypt. Even earlier, at the door of Lot's house in Sodom. They could not find that door either. Then the Lord said, as it were: "I am the door." Much later, admittedly, but that is how it is. Many people still cannot find the door today and say it cannot be found. That is not true, but if you are not planning to go through it anyway, you do not need to know where it is. That door is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
By that door the donkey was tied. Beyond that door there is a parting of the ways. There is a fork, and the question is: left or right? It is to the right — Bethany. That is the route he took, to the Church. All this is what is pictured here: the calling of the Church instead of that of Israel. The interruption of the timetable after the 69th week of Daniel, instead of the immediate start of the 70th week. When they "came nigh to Jerusalem," when they approached the city, the kingdom should have come, but it did not. They came to the mount of Olives. It was not Bethphage, but Bethany.

A Donkey and Her Colt
The Lord Jesus sent two of his disciples. They are a picture of the Church. He says to them:

> Mark 11:2
> And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

A colt on which no one had ever sat. Some say an unbroken colt, but you yourselves do not really believe it was a wild colt, do you? No one had ever ridden on it; it had never been used for anything. That means it was a beast of burden, a pack animal. But this colt had never yet been used as a beast of burden. Here it speaks of a colt; in other places it says there were two animals — a donkey and her colt. I do not see what difference that makes. If a colt is mentioned, perhaps a horse or a camel was standing there too — who can say? It does not matter to us what else was there. It is about that colt.
From the other accounts in Matthew and Zechariah 9 you can gather that not only a colt was standing there but also its mother. The colt had not only never been ridden but was not even tied up by itself. Here it does say it was tied, but you do not need to tie up a colt. You tie up the mother and the colt stays neatly with its mother. Then it is also tied, in effect. It does not occur to the animal to run away. That is also a way of binding the colt. A colt is bound to its mother by an inseparable bond. You do not see the bond, but it is there. I therefore believe it was the same with this colt. It comes to the same thing. It was bound, had to be loosed, and had never been used.
Donkeys (female) are a picture of Israel. A donkey is always a picture of Israel — female and, moreover, bearing a burden, that is, living under the law. Just search the Old Testament for what is said about donkeys, especially female donkeys. You will then see that a donkey is always a picture of Israel. The finest example I find is that of Saul. He

was looking for the donkeys and then he found the kingship. Instead of finding the donkeys he was anointed king. If you pay close attention you hardly notice the difference, because those donkeys are a picture of Israel. Finding the donkeys is the same as finding Israel. He did not find the donkeys, but he did find Israel. Afterwards he was anointed king and received the message that the donkeys had been found. That is typology.

A donkey gives birth to a young one; a new generation comes forth; something is born from it — namely a colt, a male son. The woman in Revelation 12 — a picture of Israel — gives birth to a man child, namely the Church. That colt here is, just like the mount of Olives, Bethany and the two men, a picture of the Church — of us, in other words. That is why I also feel connected with donkeys. There is a great deal that can be said about it. Incidentally, there was a donkey that also had quite a lot to say: Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22). That is not so strange at all, because the most important thing about Israel is that the oracles of God were committed unto them (Romans 3:2). Can a donkey speak or not? Yes indeed, a donkey can speak. The strange thing is only that it usually does not. It ought to. Balaam's donkey did. When someone speaks, the lower jaw moves — the jawbone. Later someone else once found a donkey's jawbone. Samson found a jawbone of an ass (so to speak, that of Balaam's donkey) and with it he slew the Philistines, for there is power in the word of the donkey (Judges 15). It then concerns the word of the believer, for that is ultimately what the donkey pictures. If you read the story of Samson carefully you even read that water came out of it — that the jawbone of that donkey was a fountain of water. The translators always get into a muddle when they read it, for how do you translate something like that? But that is actually what it says. That is because water is a picture of the word, and the word is brought forth by the jawbone.

What does a real donkey actually say when it speaks? It says "i-a." And what do you think that means? It is simply the name Jehovah. It is the abbreviation of Jehovah or Jahweh. That is why, when we confirm or affirm something, we say "yes." Why? Because it is actually the name of Jehovah. There is nothing stronger, nothing more powerful, nothing more confirmatory, nothing more positive than the Lord himself. When we affirm something and therefore make a statement about it, we say shortly and powerfully: Yes! That is, the name of Jehovah. And if Israel were to speak the word of God, she would first of all make known the name of Jehovah. The peculiar thing is that today we know an Israel that can say everything as long as it is not the name of Jehovah. And that calls itself a donkey... The wisest thing a person can do is precisely to call on that Name. The apostle Peter says, referring to the Scriptures and the prophets:

> Acts 2:21
> And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The oracles of God were committed to Israel, yet it is the one Name they precisely do not call upon or utter. They refrain for a pious reason, but it is mistaken. That is exactly the Name that should be called upon, "for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32). A donkey, at least, does so. But a donkey usually stumbles over the same stone only once, not twice. On reflection, we know someone who was himself called "stone." He was actually something of a donkey too — I mean Peter. Before the death of the Lord Jesus he stumbled over the stone three times on the same

occasion. Three times he said, “I know not the man” (see Matthew 26). Peter stumbled over the stone of stumbling, the rock of offence.
The Dutch proverb teaches that a donkey does that only once. And indeed that is exactly what happened. I also know “someone” who did it twice — that was Israel. That people rejected the Lord Jesus, so that he was killed, and then when he appeared afterwards as the risen One they rejected him again. That is twice. Peter did it once, after which the Lord was killed. But when the Lord had risen he met him and had three opportunities to say that he loved the Lord (see John 21). He was embarrassed by it, but it had to be done. The second time he did not stumble over the Stone. In this he is a picture of the believing remnant of Israel. That remnant first rejected the Messiah, which led to his crucifixion, but will afterwards come to faith in the risen Christ.
That Israel would reject the Lord Jesus as Messiah is one thing. That they would reject him afterwards, after he had been raised from the dead, that is unforgivable. A donkey does not do it that way.

No Yoke Borne, Not Under the Law
Israel stumbled twice over that Stone, but the believers from Israel stumbled only once. The second time they came to acceptance of that Lord. That is a donkey. Everyone who does that, who thus comes to acceptance of the risen Christ, may be a donkey, but a free one. In this the Church is the antitype. This male colt, on which no one had ever ridden, is a picture of the Church. Born from Israel, yet it has never borne a yoke. It has never belonged to anyone. It has never been under the law. Never under the power of sin.
Peter said that a believer is never under the law, for no one has ever been able to bear it (Acts 15:10). Neither we nor our fathers. This establishes that the Church truly answers to the picture of the donkey: never ridden, never used as a burden-bearer. The only One to whom the Church has ever been bound, is bound now, and will remain bound, is the Lord Jesus himself. He had the donkey brought, loosed the animal, and then seated himself upon it. He became, as it were, one whole with this donkey. He identified himself with it. In the Pauline epistles it is simply called: the Church is the Body of Christ. Can you picture it — a donkey as the Body of the Lord Jesus? The two became one whole. The Lord walked, as it were, with the legs of the donkey.
On another occasion we also see him passing by on a donkey. Then he came from Samaria, along the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. There was someone travelling that road in the wrong direction, from Jerusalem to Jericho. He fell among thieves, and then the merciful Samaritan came from the other side, on his way to Jerusalem. The road would have gone over the mount of Olives. Perhaps it was even there. He took the victim up and set him on his own beast (Luke 10). That means he became one whole with him. It is exactly the same story: a picture of the Church. Two pence were paid for the inn, in expectation of his return. The donkey is therefore a picture of the Church.
The donkey is a picture of the believer. The donkey is really a somewhat ridiculous horse. It could have been a horse, but it did not turn out that way. It looks rather comical, with its rather peculiarly large ears. That is why it is also a picture of the believer — one who can hear well.
When you see an animal with very large ears, you know it is a picture of faith. What is the animal with the largest ears? An elephant. What is the animal with the best memory? Also an elephant. And what is the largest land animal? An elephant. It is the greatest

and the strongest, and one with the best spiritual qualities — memory and hearing. The animal remembers extraordinarily well and for a long time, for it also lives to a great age. A picture of the believer.

> Mark 11:3, 5-7
> And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.
> And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?
> And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.
> And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

Who was the owner of the donkey, and who were the people who concerned themselves with it? It was the innkeeper from the parable of the good Samaritan. When you understand things like this you have come a good way. He was the innkeeper and the brother of Boaz, and in Jerusalem four days later than this event in Mark 11 he was walking with a pitcher of water on his shoulder to the upper room, and his name was "Such an One." Another name for him is the Holy Spirit. Yet another name is the Lord Jesus Christ, who hides himself — the mysterious One, the One who has hidden himself, now at the right hand of God. Someone who cannot be addressed, whom the world does not know. But that is not the case! He has been rejected by the world! He is Someone who is most certainly actively present.

In the story of Boaz he was the first kinsman-redeemer. He must therefore have been an older brother of Boaz. He says to Boaz: "I cannot redeem, I cannot marry Ruth, for I already have an inheritance." He already had a wife. Then Boaz said: "Then I will do it," and he married Ruth (Ruth 2–4). Who, in the typical sense, is that older brother of Boaz who married the wife we do not know? It is Christ in our days, who has a bond with the Church. Because the Lord has that bond, he cannot now redeem Israel, pictured in Ruth. And so Boaz says: "Then I will do it." Boaz is a picture of the Lord at his second coming. His older brother is referred to as "Such an One" — the one with the shoe (Ruth 4:8), "Ploni Almoni" in Hebrew.

When David later appears somewhere in his flight, they ask: "Where are thy young men?" (1 Samuel 21). No one knows who they are, but David answers: "I have sent them to the place of Such an One. Ploni Almoni." There you find David as a picture of the rejected Christ, in flight, cast outside the camp.

Where are his young men, those who believe in him? In the house of Such an One. Where is the victim of those murderers on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, or the other way round? In the house of the innkeeper. Such an One, therefore. When the disciples ask the Lord: "Where wilt thou that we prepare the passover?" he says: "Go into the city, and there shall a man meet you" — Such an One — "bearing a pitcher of water." The water-carrier. The One who carries the word on his shoulder. Normally the government is upon his shoulder, but not now. Now he carries only the word. He carries it inside, and there the disciples had to be. Three storeys up, though that is not stated. In the upper room, for that is where the Church is. High up, in the third heaven. There we are gathered, there is our position, there we are cared for by Such an One. All this stands in the Bible and belongs together. Here it is the Owner of the donkey, of course. The One who cares for the donkey. The One who cares for the Church. One whole with the Church.

Mark 11:7
And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

He "sat upon him." He therefore identified himself with it. He became one whole with this donkey. The Lord has become one whole with the Church, and "his burden is light and his yoke is easy" (Matthew 11:30). The Church has no other burden or yoke to bear than that of the Lord himself.

Mark 11:9-10
And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:
Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

The kingdom of David "that cometh in the name of the Lord." That is a direct reference to the promises made to David by the Lord in 2 Samuel 7. The Lord says: "David, thou shalt have a son with an unshakeable kingdom, but he shall be to me a Son, and I will be his Father." The question is: whose son is the Messiah? If the answer is: David's, why then does David call him "my Lord"? (Psalm 110:1). Because the Son of David is also the Son of God. So when the kingdom of the Son of David comes, the kingdom of the Son of God also comes. Which is more important? The highest, of course — that which is of God. And so when the kingdom of the Son of David comes, it comes in the name of God and therefore in the name of the Lord. Where is the kingdom first of all? In heaven. It is the kingdom of the Son of David, but first in heaven, because the Son of David is the Son of God. Afterwards it will also come on the earth. That is the Messiah, the Son of David and the Son of God. The Son of David according to the flesh (Romans 1:3) and the Son of God according to the Spirit (Romans 1:4). Both things are true.

When the kingdom is announced here it is indeed of David, but it comes in the name of the Lord. That is why it adds: "Hosanna in the highest." In the translation it even says "highest heavens," because the translators were afraid we would not understand. It concerns a heavenly kingdom and not in the first place an earthly one. If it had been on the earth they would have had to cry this in Jerusalem. They were here on the mount of Olives and cried: "Hosanna in the highest." They say exactly the same as the angels: "Glory to God in the highest." Only afterwards peace on earth. Glory to God in the highest — that is how it is now. Peace on earth comes only afterwards. That is what is pictured here. The Lord is a God in the highest, on the mount of Olives. Peace comes only afterwards, in Jerusalem.

Fulfilment of the Prophecy in Zechariah

There is one thing about this event that I absolutely must still tell. It is not stated here, but in Matthew it says:

Matthew 21:4-5
Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,
Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

These verses in Matthew say that this entry at Jerusalem is the fulfilment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. That is important, because thereby we at least learn how those prophecies are to be understood. When Zechariah therefore says:

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Is this then meant literally or not? Yes, for that is stated in Matthew 21. Let us also read what comes before:

Zechariah 9:1-6

The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD.

And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.

Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.

Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza also shall see it, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

In every case these are cities of the Philistines. Judgment will come upon them.

Zechariah 9:8

And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

The Lord himself will, as it were, encamp around Jerusalem to keep the enemy out. He will protect Jerusalem, and therefore in effect all Israel, especially from the Philistines or Palestinians (for they are the same). Then it continues:

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

He will come, riding upon an ass — that is (the “and” should be understood as “namely”) upon a colt. When the Lord came on an ass, did he then deliver Israel from the Philistines? Israel had already been delivered from the Philistines in the time of David. After that nothing more was heard of them. There were no Philistines when the Lord came on an ass.

Quite recently, less than fifty years ago, the Philistines or Palestinians were “rediscovered.” In Palestine there lay a piece of untilled land, a desert, where no one wanted to live. That was roughly how it was around the turn of the century (1900). Under Zionism, Jews from all over the world moved to Palestine. By the time the Jewish state was declared in 1948 quite a number of Arabs were already living there. The land had already been considerably developed, which made it habitable for everyone, including Arabs. At first there were none. The land was brought into cultivation. Afterwards Arabs did live there, and when the Jewish state was proclaimed the neighbouring Arab peoples said: “We will drive the Jews into the sea.” Arabs living in the Jewish state, in the midst of the Jews, were called upon to leave the country. Otherwise they would be hit by bombs. The intention was that the Jews would be wiped out in that place, after which the Arabs

could settle there. They obeyed the call, left the country, and thought they could house themselves for the time being in refugee camps. They are called Palestinian refugees, but they are in reality the same as the Philistines. They call themselves that (in English: Philistines). We stubbornly call them Palestinians. So they exist now, but they did not exist in the days of the Lord Jesus, nor for a long time afterwards.

> Zechariah 9:13
> When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

When Judah and Ephraim — in short, all Israel — have come to conversion and will fight against Greece. In the past this did not happen, but such a Greek empire will certainly exist in the future. The very last world empire in the prophecy of Daniel is called the restored Greek empire. That is to say, the restored empire of Alexander the Great, with Babylon as its capital. That is why Babylon will then have been rebuilt. Babylon was the capital of the empire of Alexander the Great. In the future there will come an empire that is in effect the continuation of the old Greek empire. The king of that empire, the last great ruler — the beast — is a Philistine. I believe on the ground of Scripture that this is so. A Greek world empire with a Philistine at its head. When I read this prophecy — and we read it after all the other prophecies of the Old Testament have already taken place, for Zechariah is the one before last — I have Daniel, Ezekiel and Isaiah in mind. We already know then how it will go.

When we read this prophecy we are reading in these verses about the last great final battle between the nations, what is called Armageddon. It is the last final battle in which the armies of the last Greek world empire, under the dominion of Babylon and led by a Philistine, will be destroyed. That is what we read here in chapter 9. But then only one verse before, namely verse 9. Of this verse Matthew 21 states that it was fulfilled at the entry into Jerusalem.

That is not strange, for the story is this: every time the New Testament says “this is the fulfilment of the prophecy,” it points to yet another fulfilment in the future — exactly the same one. That means that here in Zechariah it says that the Lord will come on an ass, and that he will therefore still come in the future on an ass. Before the kingdom of Christ is established, he will have appeared on an ass. That is what Zechariah says. If in the days of the Lord Jesus, or in the days of Peter, someone had said, “This Jesus cannot be the Messiah, for he must come on an ass,” everyone would have said that this had already happened at the entry into Jerusalem. There was and is therefore no excuse at all for rejecting this Jesus as Messiah. And yet there is something else behind it.

Ultimately the Lord will appear in the future on the mount of Olives, according to Zechariah 14. I do not know why he would not then also ride on an ass, literally. Of much greater importance than whether he will ride on an ass is that when he comes on the mount of Olives in the future, there will then be a real, ultimate and complete fulfilment of this prophecy. At that time the Greek world empire will be destroyed, the Philistines will be defeated, and Israel will be converted.

The Donkey Is a Type of the Church

What is this donkey in this connection? This prophecy in Zechariah 9 is ultimately a prophecy in which it is hidden that the Lord will appear in the future in all his glory to reveal his kingdom. At that moment he comes with the Church. That is hidden in the Old

Testament and therefore not stated. That is why it says: “He comes with an ass.” Through the application in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John we understand that this donkey is a type of the Church. That therefore actually means that the Lord comes with an ass and thus with the Church. When the Lord appears in the future as the King, he is not alone. He appears with his own. Riding on an ass, as the One with pierced hands and feet. With a pierced side as well. Lowly — an ass is the mount of a poor man — but that is how the Lord also appears there, so that Israel on that occasion may see whom they have pierced (Zechariah 12:10). That he is that Saviour who once in the past came in humiliation. Jesus of Nazareth, who then also came on an ass. I consider it very probable that he will appear literally on an ass in the future, and yet together with the Church. That will equally have a literal application in the future.

> Zechariah 9:9
> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

If I tell it a little more briefly, it says: “Daughter of Zion, behold thy King comes as Saviour and with an ass.” I keep that in mind when I go to Isaiah 62:Isaiah 62:11
Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.
What is the reward of the Lord Jesus Christ? It is the Church. Here therefore stands exactly the same as in Zechariah 9:9. Thy King comes and he is Saviour. One text then says, His reward is with him, and the other text: His ass is with him. That is the same. So when it is said to Israel that the King comes — speaking of the appearing of the Lord on the mount of Olives in the future, at the end of the 70th week of Daniel — one text says that his reward is with him and the other text says that his ass is with him. It means nothing else than that he comes with the Church. We know that when he shall be manifested, we shall be like him. We shall be manifested with him in glory (1 John 3).

From the Side of the Lord Jesus

Another text I want to place alongside is Zechariah 12:10.

> Zechariah 12:10b
> … and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, …Here it does not say “with my reward,” nor “with my ass,” but “whom they have pierced.” John says later that what stands in Zechariah 12 was fulfilled in this way.
> John 19:34-37
> But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
> And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.
> For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
> And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

When it says “this is the fulfilment of the prophecy,” we know that this is not the final fulfilment. The “opening” of the side of the Lord Jesus already occurred once earlier in the Bible. Then it was about Adam. The first Adam fell into a deep sleep, death. Then the Lord opened the side of Adam and what came out? The woman, Eve. Then comes the

last Adam, who likewise fell into a deep sleep (the death of the Lord Jesus), and then the Gentiles opened his side with a spear, from which came blood and water and, on closer consideration, also Spirit (1 John 5).
From the side of the Lord Jesus Christ comes that which is described as his wife, but which in reality is his Body. She is described as Eve, the wife of Adam, but she is “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23). It seldom happens that a man can say that of his wife. Actually only twice in history. One time was in the case of Adam and the other time, said Paul, it concerns Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:29-32).
The opening of the side of the Lord Jesus, from which came blood and water — in other words Spirit — is a picture of how the Church comes into being. Just read the story on in 1 John 5.1 John 5:6 and 8b (verses 7 and 8a are not in the original text)
This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.
… the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.
These are they that bear witness, namely water, blood and, on closer consideration, also Spirit. They bear witness that our God has given eternal life. Not out of the Son, but in the Son. And yet it came out, just as Eve came out of Adam. That concerns the Church, which is out of Christ, but in reality is still in Christ. So when it says “they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,” that is true, but they did rather more than that alone. This stands here because it is a reference to the Church. They will look upon him who has brought forth a Church out of the Gentiles, out of the other nations. When the Lord appears there, he does so with his reward, with his ass, as the One whose side was pierced. That means three times the same thing, namely: they will look upon him who comes with his Church. With those who are his Body, who have not stumbled twice over the same stone. The entry into Jerusalem is the picture of that. It is a picture of how the ways would part. How the 69th week of Daniel was over and the Lord would take another way. Not straight on to Jerusalem, but returning to the mount of Olives, to Bethany, to Lazarus, to the house that was filled with the odour of his anointed feet (John 12:3). All of it still a description of the Church.
When the Lord appears in the future to Israel, Israel will be amazed to see that the Messiah who is coming will not be alone, but accompanied by a great host. If that is not a reason to rejoice! We belong to that host. We do not look up at the mount of Olives from below, but the other way round. We appear with the Lord from above upon the mount of Olives. Whether they will see us there immediately I do not know. Perhaps there will not be enough room for all of us. At any rate they will see the Lord with the ass, with his Reward and with his pierced side, as a picture of what was accomplished by the first coming of Christ. The calling of you and me out of the world, out of the Gentiles, out of darkness, into his house, into his marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).
We are the ones who are joined to this living Christ, whose kingdom is in heaven and not in Jerusalem. Not in the camp, but outside it. When we look at Jerusalem as it now is, we have the same reason to weep over the city that will be destroyed. On the other hand we also have reason to look forward to that glorification which will also be our portion when we too share in the glorification of Christ in the future.
Amen